

**United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Criminal Investigation Division  
Investigative Activity Report**

**Case Number**

1000-M646

**Case Title:**

Shell Puget Sound Refinery

**Reporting Office:**

Seattle, WA, Area Office

**Subject of Report:**

Contact with Mike Boykin

**Activity Date:**

February 24, 2015

**Reporting Official and Date:**

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Special Agent

**Approving Official and Date:**

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Assistant Special Agent in Charge

10-MAR-2015, Signed by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

11-MAR-2015, Approved by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Special Agent in Charge

**SYNOPSIS**

On February 24, 2015, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Special Agent (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), spoke with EPA Region 10 On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Mike Boykin, regarding EPA's Emergency Response to the Shell Puget Sound Refinery's odor/vapor release that occurred on Friday February 20, 2015. OSC Boykin advised that he along with his supervisor, Calvin Terada, went to the Shell Refinery in Anacortes, after receiving over 30 citizen complaints about a noxious odor in the air that was making people in LaConner, WA and on the Swinomish Tribal Reservation ill.

**DETAILS**

On February 24, 2015, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Special Agent (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), spoke with EPA Region 10 On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Mike Boykin, regarding EPA's Emergency Response to the Shell Puget Sound Refinery's odor/vapor release that occurred on Friday February 20, 2015. OSC Boykin advised that he along with his supervisor, Calvin Terada, went to the Shell Refinery in Anacortes, after receiving over 30 citizen complaints about a noxious odor in the air that was making people in LaConner, WA and on the Swinomish Tribal Reservation ill. Additionally, the Emergency Response Unit received a phone call from EPA Region 10 Regional Administrator, Dennis McLerran, asking that EPA respond to determine what was happening at the Shell Refinery.

Boykin advised that he along with his supervisor, Calvin Terada, arrived at the Shell Puget Sound Refinery (Shell) at approximately 0100 hours on Saturday February 21, 2015. He stated that he called Shell prior to arriving to notify them that EPA was on their way to determine the cause of the odor release. Boykin reported that when he and Terada arrived, they were met by (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) who were working on the unit at the time of the release. Boykin advised that he did not get the names of the operators who were in charge of cleaning the scrubber.

During the meeting, Shell informed the OSC's that the refinery was conducting routine maintenance and cleaning on a scrubber unit. On Thursday February 19, 2015, refinery workers shut off the flare that is attached to the scrubber so that workers could begin removing waste from the inside of the scrubber. Shell explained that on the morning of Friday February 20, 2015, refinery workers began pumping out waste and materials associated with the scrubber. According to Shell, refinery workers began steam cleaning the inside of the scrubber unit around 1500 PST. As the refinery workers began steam cleaning the inside of the scrubber, chemicals and wastes that were still inside the unit were released out the stack. Because the flare unit attached to the scrubber was

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turned off on Thursday, the chemical vapors that escaped the stack were not incinerated and therefore released into the atmosphere.

Shell reported that the refinery began receiving odor complaints around 1630 PST. As a result of the complaints, Shell stopped the cleaning process around 1630 PST.

Shell told the OSC's that they were calling the release an "Excess Emission Event." Shell advised that they did not report the release to the National Response Center.

Boykin advised that due to an atmospheric inversion in the area, when the vapors released they stayed trapped in the air above LaConner, WA and the Swinomish Tribe for several hours. Shell told the OSC's that they should have paid closer attention to the weather prior to steam cleaning the scrubber.

Shell reported that they had an industrial hygienist patrolling the area with a four-gas meter sometime after they were notified by the public of the release. According to Shell, the four-gas meter did not sense any volatiles in the atmosphere around the refinery.

Boykin explained that their meeting with Shell lasted about one hour. Afterwards, the OSC's drove around LaConner, WA to determine if the community was still being impacted by the odor. Boykin stated that they did not detect any odor while they were driving around the community.

Boykin advised that while they were driving around the community, they spotted a (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) outside a building and stopped to speak with him about the odor in the air. Boykin stated that he did not get the (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). The (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) told the OSC's that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) did smell a strong sulfur-like smell in the air during the day. The (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) reported that the smell had dissipated by 2000 PST.

Boykin stated that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) would be a good contact to determine what occurred at the refinery and what pollutants may have been released.

On February 24, 2015, OSC Boykin emailed SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) a possible Facebook post by a current Shell Refinery employee. The Facebook post indicates that Shell management knowingly rushed the maintenance operation despite warnings from their own workers that it was hazardous to do so in order to expedite the process and restart operations. The Facebook excerpt received from OSC Boykin is attached to this IAR.

**ATTACHMENT**

Facebook Message

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